

The President's Daily Brief

21 October 1970

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Lon Nol disclosed his current military strategy in a recent conversation with Ambassador Swank. (Page 1)

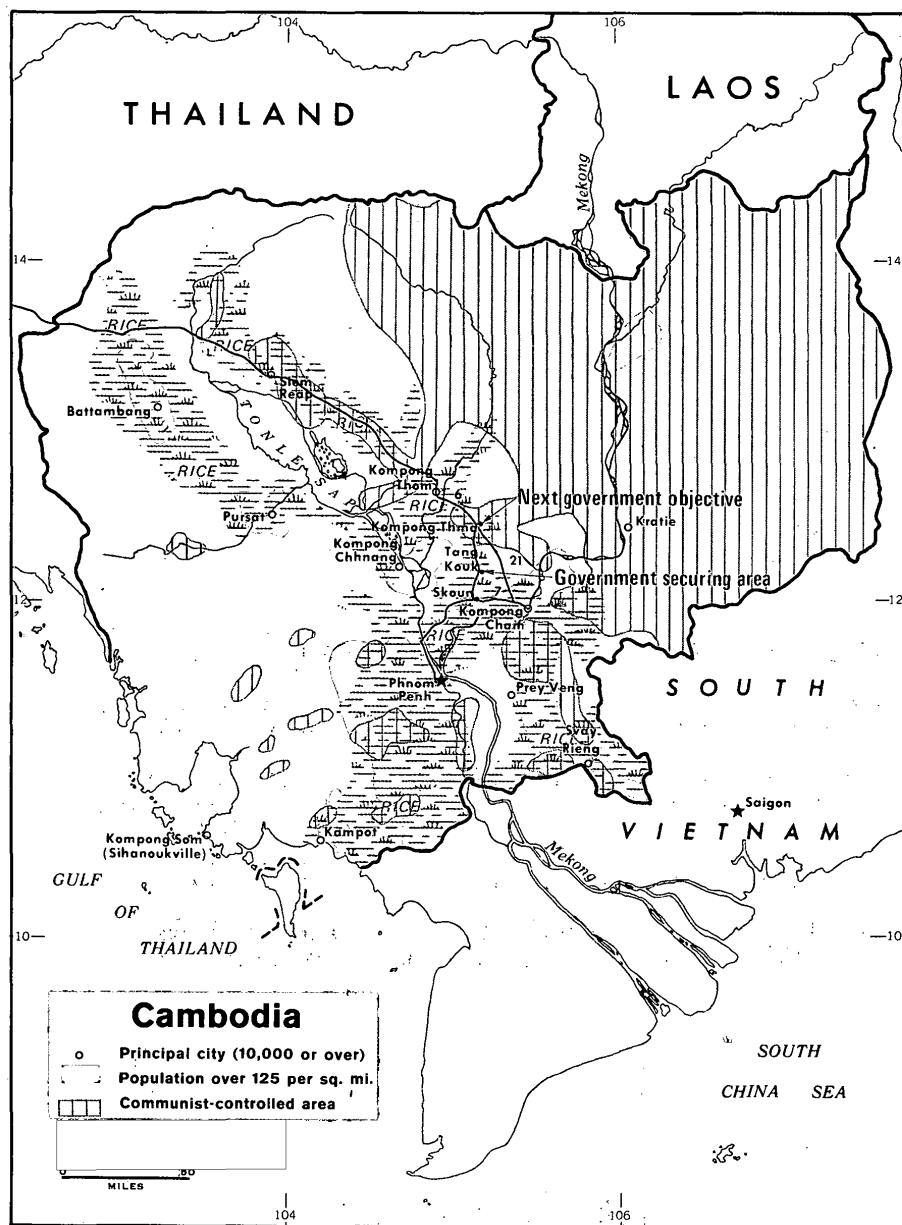
Our first impressions of the new Egyptian cabinet appear on Page 2.

The Japanese leadership continues its cautious approach toward shifts in its defense policies. (Page 3)

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CAMBODIA

Lon Nol told Ambassador Swank in a briefing on military strategy Monday that the Route 6 column will resume its slow advance toward Kompong Thom city once Tang Kouk is secured and the population in rear areas is organized. The column will try next to take the enemy-held town of Kompong Thma, at the junction of Routes 6 and 21.

Over the longer run, Lon Nol wants to secure Route 6 up to Kompong Thom and Siem Reap by moving troops well north of Route 6--perhaps as far as the Lao border--in order to plug Communist infiltration routes. Such an operation would move slowly with efforts being made to "mobilize" the people along the way before each new step forward.

Army Deputy Chief of Staff Sutsakhan will probably cover the same ground in his meeting with Admiral McCain in Honolulu later this week. Sutsakhan is expected to press for additional US military aid, including more arms and M-113 personnel carriers.

Ambassador Swank found Lon Nol's presentation unusually disjointed but thought it reflected some confidence in the present military situation. Swank was impressed by Lon Nol's emphasis on conducting a "people's war" that calls for winning over the rural population and consolidating control over the countryside as the army moves forward militarily.

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EGYPT

The new cabinet announced yesterday seems to reflect a desire for continuity, peace, and stability by Egyptians in high places. The selection of Mahmud Fawzi, a skilled diplomat who served as Nasir's foreign policy adviser, as Premier underlines Cairo's continued interest in seeking a negotiated solution to the confrontation with Israel. Fawzi does not have a power base of his own, an added advantage in this instance, because his appointment will not stir the bitter political infighting that might have developed if the more influential Ali Sabri or Zakariya Muhyeddin had been selected.

Fawzi

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is popular with the officer corps, another important qualification for a durable government in Egypt.

The makeup of the new cabinet also extracts maximum political mileage from the memory of Nasir by creating the impression that the policies of the lost leader continue uninterrupted. Virtually all of Nasir's cabinet members were retained and Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur, a former military colleague of Sadat and Nasir, was named secretary general of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), Egypt's sole political party. Abu-al-Nur had been the ASU's assistant secretary general since the June 1967 war.

In sum, the distribution of power has not been seriously altered by the formation of the new government. The transitional collegial leadership remains intact and Sadat, Minister of State Sami Sharaf, and Interior Minister Sharawi Jumah are still the key decision-makers in Egypt. Ali Sabri, a pro-Soviet member of the hierarchy, is reported to be slated for the post of vice president in charge of foreign affairs where he could serve as a channel to Moscow.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**JAPAN**

The cabinet made some significant last-minute revisions in the defense policy paper it approved yesterday. Instead of saying "present" government policy opposes defensive tactical nuclear weapons, the revised draft notes that even if these weapons are constitutionally permissible, the government adheres to its traditional rejection of nuclear armaments. Statements that the US-Japanese mutual security treaty should continue "semipermanently" and that Japan would never reintroduce military conscription were also deleted.

The policy guidelines in this paper--the first defense policy paper since World War II--are relatively cautious. Last year the paper was shelved because the government wanted to avoid controversy during the period prior to the renewal of the US-Japanese security treaty. The paper's emphasis on the purely defensive nature of the military forces is intended to ease fears in Japan and elsewhere that militarism is being revived. Nevertheless, a small but increasingly vocal group, led by Defense Agency chief Nakasone, favors a stronger defense posture which does not exclude nuclear weapons.

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NOTES

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Singapore: Lee Kuan Yew has admitted that his offer to open Singapore facilities to Soviet naval vessels is largely intended to frighten the Australians into establishing a permanent defense presence in Singapore. In a talk with a Department of State officer this week, Lee also denied any thought of permitting Soviet use of the naval base itself--he had in mind only "casual visits" to commercial shipyards for minor servicing. Lee probably realizes that his ploy is not likely to alter substantially Australia's limited "forward defense" policy but hopes that, at a minimum, it will bring about increased Western use of Singapore facilities.

Italy: Colombo's coalition government faces a crucial test in Parliament on the ratification of fiscal and economic decrees that are central to the government's reform program. These decrees have been in effect since August but will expire on 26 October without parliamentary approval. Passage seems likely, but there will be intense maneuvering among diverse political elements within the coalition, and calculated obstructionism by extreme left Proletarian Socialists and a militant splinter group within Italy's Communist Party.

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Romania: Ceausescu's address to the UN General Assembly Monday was a typical Romanian performance of measured criticism directed at East and West. While he did not hesitate to call on the United States by name in connection with the war in Vietnam, his repeated references to the rights of small nations were an obvious allusion to Romania's struggles against Soviet hegemony. His remark that a "people can be truly free" only to the extent that it has a powerful economic and scientific foundation seems aimed primarily at preparing the United States for talks on closer economic ties. This topic, along with Romania's championship of Communist China's cause, is likely to be on Ceausescu's mind when he talks with President Nixon next Monday.

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